

Gradisher, Joseph F CIV USN DCNO N2N6 (USA)

From: Gradisher, Joseph F CIV USN DCNO N2N6 (US)
Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2019 8:40 AM
To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] (B)(6)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Gough, Susan L (Sue) CIV
OSD PA (USA); [REDACTED] (B)(6)
Subject: The Drive - Latest UAP Article (Walker Letter focus)
Signed By: [REDACTED] (B)(6)
Categories: Green Category

[REDACTED] (B)(6),

Wanted to make sure you've seen the latest article by The Drive, this one focused on the letter that Rep Walker sent to SECNAV.

FYI, the Virginian Pilot did not run their article on UAPs today as they said they would.

Will provide when it hits the streets.

Regards,

Joe

Joe Gradisher
Captain, U.S. Navy (ret)
N2N6 Strategic Engagements
[REDACTED] (B)(6)

Congressman Has Written An Official Letter To The Navy Demanding Answers On UFOs

The letter says that the unexplained sightings could reflect emerging threats to American airspace and domestic security.

The Drive, 30 July 2019... by Joseph Trevithick

A member of the House of Representatives says the recent uptick in news regarding what many would call unidentified flying objects, or UFOs, something The War Zone has been a leading investigative source of, could reflect emerging threats to U.S. national airspace and homeland security, rather than simply military and intelligence concerns. Mark Walker, a Republican from North Carolina, has now written an open letter to Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer asking for more details about what that service is doing to record and assess sightings of what are increasingly referred to as unidentified aerial phenomena, or UAP.

Walker, who is a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security and the ranking Republican on its Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism, wrote the letter to Spencer on July 16, 2019. He subsequently made it public on his website on July 29, 2019, three days after he went on Fox News' "Tucker Carlson Tonight" to voice his concerns.

"The reports mention the existence of these encounters both domestically and abroad during various [U.S. military] missions and trainings," Walker wrote in his letter. "Additionally, there have been reports of significant investments in advanced aerospace technologies like the recorded UAP encounters by China."

"If the accounts are true, the unidentified crafts could pose a serious security risk to our military personnel and defense apparatus," he continued. "As a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security and the Ranking Member for the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism, these reports are concerning from a national airspace and domestic security perspective."

"As the ranking member of terrorism and counterintelligence [Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism], we have questions," Walker told Carlson. "It comes down to some of the new infrared radar systems that we're putting on some of our new jets are detecting some things out there."

"Is this something that's a defense mechanism from another country? We do know that China is looking at hypersonic missiles," Walker continued. "We don't know if the nuclear warheads can be attached to those, is it something like that or is it something more? We don't know but I feel like it's something we must take a look at, and that's why we've written Secretary Spencer of the Navy."

Walker's reference to "infrared radar systems" appears to be a conflation of the fact the apparent increase in Navy UAP sightings has coincided with the service's development and fielding of new radar systems, particularly the AN/APG-79 Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar on the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, and plans to give those same aircraft, among others, podded infrared search and track (IRST) sensors in the coming years. The War Zone was the first to explore how these developments have impacted UAP reporting and will continue to do so in the future.

The comments regarding China in Walker's letter are less clear, but it appears that he is referring to advanced aerospace developments that the Chinese have been reportedly pursuing that might help explain at least some UAP sightings. In June 2019, The War Zone was first to report that Dr. James Sheehy, Chief Technical Officer (CTO) of the Naval Aviation Enterprise at Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR), had cited Chinese work in various related fields in a letter of support for a set of patent applications that Navy researcher Dr. Salvatore Cezar Pais had first begun to file in 2016. Pais subsequently obtained those patents, which border on the science fiction, and The War Zone has analyzed them in detail and continues to investigate their origins and validity.

Whatever the exact issues or concerns were that prompted Walker to reach out to Secretary Spencer, he says he wants to know how the Navy logs reported sightings and investigates them, as well as what resources the service is dedicating to these tasks. In addition, he wants to know if there is any "physical evidence or otherwise" that backs up any of the existing reports, which could include radar and other sensor data.

There have also been claims that U.S. military offices charged with looking into these claims had actual physical remains of UFOs, but there has been nothing conclusive to substantiate them. However, these assertions have persisted, with Luis Elizondo, who has self-described himself as the former head of the Pentagon's Advanced Aerospace Threat and Identification Program (AATIP), repeating them again in a separate interview on Tucker Carlson's show just in May 2019, as seen in the view below. Between 2008 and 2012, AATIP was charged with investigating UAP reports, among other things.

Walker also wants to know if the Navy is aware of any "private companies or foreign nations" who might have made revolutionary aerospace developments that would explain the UAP reports.

These requests, as well as the letter's very existence, are notable. That the Congressman from North Carolina does not already have answers to his questions, including the full scope of the Navy's publicly announced new UAP reporting procedures, strongly suggests that the U.S. government continues to treat these sightings almost exclusively as military and foreign intelligence issues, rather than ones that could impact homeland security.

This would certainly fit with what we have learned so far about AATIP, and its predecessor, the Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Applications (AAWSA) program, which were housed at various times under the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. AAWSA, in particular, was under the direction of the DIA's Defense Warning Office, which exists specifically to monitor for potential advanced technological developments that could threaten U.S. national security.

Even so, it would be particularly curious if none of the members of the House's Homeland Security Committee had received a briefing from the Navy on the subject, given the obvious domestic security implications. If some members of the committee had received such a briefing, but Walker had not, it is hard to imagine he would not have complained about this fact in his letter. The Navy has publicly said that it has provided briefings to multiple legislators with regards to the UAP issue, though it has not provided a full list of lawmakers who have gotten one or offered details about the information therein. Some of these briefings may have included still-classified explanations for at least some of the UAP reports.

The War Zone has already reported that the UAP issue had become so pronounced that Navy base commanders on the East Coast of the United States were issuing Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) warning about them simply as potential hazards to safe flight. This would support Walker's assertion that these are national airspace and domestic security issues as much as they are military and foreign intelligence ones.

With his letter to Secretary of the Navy Spencer now a matter of public record, it will be interesting to see if Walker shares any information he gets in response and whether his open prodding has an impact on how the service, as well as the U.S. military as a whole, together with the U.S. Intelligence Community, treats UAP sightings going forward.

Article

From: Gradisher, Joseph F CIV USN DCNO N2N6 (USA)
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2019 9:04 AM
To: 'Gough, Susan L (Sue) CIV OSD PA (USA)'; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] (B)(6)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Draft Responses to [REDACTED] (B)(6) on UAPs and AATIP
Attachments: DRAFT Responses to [REDACTED] (B)(6) Nov 2019 - AF-USN Edits.docx
Signed By: [REDACTED] (B)(6)
Categories: Green Category

All,

Minor edits from Navy as in the attached.

Regards,

Joe

Joe Gradisher
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret)
N2N6 Strategic Engagements
[REDACTED] (B)(6)

PRE-DECISIONAL WORKING DOCUMENT
Exempt from FOIA under (b)(5)
DRAFT RESPONSES TO (B)(6), THE BLACK VAULT

[Navy]

Q1. In a statement you sent to Roger Glassel, Swedish Journalist, you stated: "While he was a U.S. government employee, Mr. Elizondo occasionally provided coordination and professional connections/liaison within DoD and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence." Can this be elaborated on at all? I think there is some confusion on OSD statements regarding the fact that Mr. Elizondo had "no responsibilities" on the AATIP program, but this statement shows he may have had some role, of some kind. Any additional information would be greatly appreciated to clear this up, and what Mr. Elizondo's role actually was, at least in relation to the coordination/liaison actions. Asked in this way, did the U.S. Navy view Mr. Luis Elizondo as the director of the AATIP program? Any insight you can offer here is very helpful.

Answer: (B)(5)

Q2. This may be a long shot, but are there any documents, memos, letters, etc., that you can share, that are not classified, that deal with UAP reporting, discussion, etc.? I know what are referred to as the "guidelines" are classified, and the "message to the fleet" is also classified; but is there anything on an unclassified level, other than the official statements issued, that may help shed light on this topic?

Answer: (B)(5)

[Air Force]

Q3. Going along the lines of what the Navy issued, in regards to "reporting guidelines" in relation to "unidentified aerial phenomena" -- does the Air Force have similar guidelines? If so, can you share them, or give a citation for them? I will happily look them up if they are publicly available.

Answer: (B)(5)

Q4. Does the Air Force also see threats encroaching on their military facilities and stations, as the Navy has gone on the record stating? Does the Air Force also feel there is a threat behind UAPs?

Answer: (B)(5)

(B)(5)

[Air Force vs. Navy]

Background for Q5 & Q6:

(B)(5)

Q5. Is the USAF stance that these UAPs, as reported and addressed by the Navy, can be identified to the extent that they are drones / unmanned aerial systems?

Answer:

(B)(5)

(B)(5)

Q6. Is it at all possible that the UAPs as seen by the Navy, could be classified technology as tested by another branch of the armed services, for example, USAF, and the Navy is unaware of this technology/these tests?

Answer:

(B)(5)

[DIA]

Q7. There has been much confusion on whether the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AAWSAP) and the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP) were the same program, or different. Can you tell me if they were the same or different, and did they involve different contracts? Were both awarded to BAASS, Inc.?

Answer:

(B)(5)

Q8. There has been much confusion on whether AAWSAP and/or AATIP was a "UFO" or "UAP" related program, or whether UFOs/UAPs were just an element of it. Looking over the contract solicitation for AAWSAP, I am unable to see a UAP connection (unless it came later once the contract was awarded). Are there any comments you can give me about the UFO/UAP aspect of AAWSAP and/or AATIP?

Answer:

(B)(5)

Q9. I do understand the DIA did not find AATIP worthwhile, and after review, transferred the program circa 2010. However, does the DIA have a statement about the Navy's position on Unidentified Aerial Phenomena? (For reference, Navy quotes are largely listed here, and can provide more, if needed: Caution-Caution-<https://www.theblackvault.com/documentarchive/u-s-navy-confirms-videos-depict-unidentified-aerial-phenomena-not-cleared-for-public-release/> < Caution-Caution-

[https://www.theblackvault.com/documentarchive/u-s-navy-confirms-videos-depict-unidentified-aerial-phenomena-not-cleared-for-public-release/ > \)](https://www.theblackvault.com/documentarchive/u-s-navy-confirms-videos-depict-unidentified-aerial-phenomena-not-cleared-for-public-release/)

Answer: (B)(5)

Q10. Does the DIA have any continued interest in UFOs / UAPs as the Navy has acknowledged interest in themselves, in order to provide the DOD intelligence on the matter? Any program names that can be shared?

Answer: (B)(5)

Q11. Are there any documents/reports/memos/etc. that can be shared from AAWSAP and/or AATIP that may better help the public understand its mission (beyond the bid solicitation notice and list of 38 DIRD reports)?

Answer: (B)(5)

Gradisher, Joseph F CIV USN DCNO N2N6 (USA)

From: Gradisher, Joseph F CIV USN DCNO N2N6 (USA)
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2019 1:07 PM
To: [REDACTED] (B)(6)
Subject: FW: [Non-DoD Source] Pilot Who Filmed the 'Tic Tac' UFO Speaks: 'It Wasn't Behaving by the Normal Laws of Physics'
Signed By: [REDACTED] (B)(6)
Categories: Green Category

[Have you seen this newsletter?](#)

[I received it from Sue Gough....](#)

From: [REDACTED] (B)(6)
Sent: Thursday, December 19, 2019 10:16 AM
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Pilot Who Filmed the 'Tic Tac' UFO Speaks: 'It Wasn't Behaving by the Normal Laws of Physics'

All active links contained in this email were disabled. Please verify the identity of the sender, and confirm the authenticity of all links contained within the message prior to copying and pasting the address to a Web browser.

< Caution-https://twitter.com/JackSarfatti >

Jack Sarfatti

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< Caution-https://twitter.com/JackSarfatti >

Dec 2 < Caution-https://twitter.com/JackSarfatti/status/1201555152303480832 >

Tic Tac Tech Cortona Italy Ask jacksarfatti@icloud.com < Caution-mailto:jacksarfatti@icloud.com > for

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vimeo.com/376863777 < Caution-https://t.co/K414z1TF1?amp=1 > 6 Representatives of large defense organizations attended.

eo.com

4

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< Caution-https://twitter.com/JackSarfatti/status/1201555152303480832/analytics >

< Caution-<https://twitter.com/JackSarfatti/status/1201555152303480832> >

UFOS < Caution-<http://nymag.com/tags/ufos/> > 6:00 A.M.

Navy Pilot Who Filmed the ‘Tic Tac’ UFO Speaks: ‘It Wasn’t Behaving by the Normal Laws of Physics’

By *Matt Mathew Phelan* < Caution-<http://nymag.com/author/matthew-phelan/> >
Caution-<http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/12/tic-tac-ufo-video-q-and-a-with-navy-pilot-chad-underwood.html> < Caution-<http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/12/tic-tac-ufo-video-q-and-a-with-navy-pilot-chad-underwood.html> >



d Underwood

In the 15 years since Chad Underwood recorded a bizarre and erratic UFO < Caution-<http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/03/heres-a-video-of-a-navy-jet-encountering-a-ufo.html> > — now called “the Tic Tac,” a name Underwood himself came up with — from the infrared camera on the left wing of his F/A-18 Super Hornet, he’s become a flight instructor, a civilian employee in the aerospace industry, and a father. But he has not yet spoken publicly about what he saw that day, even now, two years after his video made the front page of the *New York Times* < Caution-<http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/12/new-york-times-ufo-report.html> > . As he explained before speaking with *Intelligencer*, Underwood has mostly wanted to avoid having his name “attached to the ‘little green men < Caution-<http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/03/13-reasons-to-believe-alien-are-real.html> > ’ crazies that are out there.”

The story of the Tic Tac begins around November 10, 2004 < Caution-<https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/research/a29771548/navy-ufo-witnesses-tell-truth/> > , when radar operator Kevin Day < Caution-https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2zRabdvKnw > first reported seeing **odd and slow-moving objects flying in groups of five to ten off of San Clemente Island, west of the San Diego coast.** At an elevation of **28,000 feet, moving at a speed of approximately 120 knots (about 138 miles per hour), the clusters were too high to be birds, too slow to be conventional aircraft, and were not traveling on any established flight path, at least according to Day.**

Jack inserted

Caution-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROJ8hQBDHJM> < Caution-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROJ8hQBDHJM> >

Caution-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-hkQAG9tHE> < Caution-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-hkQAG9tHE> > . Kevin Day USS Princeton

Caution-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yR52W5d8qY8&feature=share> < Caution-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yR52W5d8qY8&feature=share> >

Caution-<https://www.academia.edu/s/7cd5cbac7e> < Caution-<https://www.academia.edu/s/7cd5cbac7e> > (note disclaimer "Bolden article" fake news debunker satire even though content has some validity though what is said about Bolden in misinformation to throw serious scientists off the scent.)

In a military report made public by KLAS-TV in Las Vegas < Caution-https://media.lasvegasnow.com/nxsglobal/lasvegasnow/document_dev/2018/05/18/TIC%20TAC%20UFO%20EXECUTIVE%20REPORT_1526682843046_42960218_ver1.0.pdf > , Day would later observe that the objects **"exhibited ballistic-missile characteristics" as they zoomed from 60,000 feet to 50 feet above the Pacific Ocean, alarmingly without producing sonic booms.** All told, radar operators with the *Princeton* spent about two weeks attempting to figure out what the objects were, a process that included having the ship's radar system shut down and recalibrated to make sure that the mysterious radar returns were not false positives, or "ghost tracks < Caution-<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/stamp/stamp.jsp?arnumber=7850967> > .

Eventually, David Fravor, commanding officer of the Black Aces, made visual confirmation of one of the objects midair during a flight-training exercise. An hour later, Underwood made his infrared recording on a second flight. "That day," Underwood recalls, "Dave Fravor was like, 'Hey, dude. BOLO.' Like, be on the lookout for just something weird. I can't remember the exact terms that he used. I didn't really think much about it at the time. But once I was able to acquire it on the radar and on the FLIR [forward-looking infrared camera], that's kind of where things — I wouldn't say 'went sideways' — but things were just different."

The footage appears to depict what Fravor had identified as a 40-foot-long, white, oblong shape (hence "Tic Tac"), hovering somewhere between 15,000 and 24,000 feet in midair and exhibiting no notable exhaust from conventional propulsion sources, even as it makes a surprising dart leftward in the video's final moments. Of the three UFO incidents captured by U.S. Navy airmen via infrared gun-camera pods, Underwood's footage remains unique for its lack of cross talk between the pilots — a fact that has led to some speculation < Caution-<https://www.terraobscura.net/blog/does-this-tic-tac-smell-funny-to-you> > about its authenticity. But "there wasn't anything on it that was protected," Underwood's retired former commanding officer Dave Fravor told *Intelligencer*. The missing audio, he says, "just didn't make the copy that was taken from the storage drive."

A former fighter pilot who served on the *Nimitz* in 2004, who spoke to *Intelligencer* on condition of anonymity, recalled an exhilarating group screening of the FLIR1 video inside the *Nimitz*'s Carrier Vehicle Intelligence Center (CVIC): "Debriefs were usually pro forma in the CVIC, but this one in particular was so odd," the former pilot said. "There weren't really a lot of skeptics in that room." Years later, **Fravor told ABC News that he didn't know what the Tic Tac was, but that "it was really impressive, really fast, and I would like to fly it."** In the CVIC that day, the anonymous pilot told *Intelligencer*, "We all had that. We all wanted to fly it."

Of the many people to have spotted or recorded the objects, a handful, like Fravor or *Princeton*'s (retired) Chief Master-at-Arms Sean Cahill < Caution-<https://www.history.com/shows/unidentified-inside-americas-ufo-investigation/season-1/episode-3> > , who reported seeing what appeared to be another grouping of the objects from the missile cruiser's deck, have spoken to journalists or documentarians. Others have not: Lieutenant Colonel "Cheeks" Kurth, a Marine Hornet squadron commanding officer who was also asked to intercept the Tic Tac, still has not done an on-the-record interview. (Three years after the sighting, however, **Kurth did take a job as a program manager at Bigelow Advanced Aerospace Space Studies in Las Vegas, whose owner Robert Bigelow has been a well-known private funder of UFO and paranormal research for decades.** It was during this same period that

Bigelow became a military contractor working on the Pentagon's once-secret UFO investigation program, the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program.)

Underwood now joins Fravor, Cahill, and others, in speaking about his experience with the Tic Tac. This conversation has been condensed and edited for clarity.

What did you think of Dave Fravor's appearance on the Joe Rogan Experience?

I'm glad Dave went on Joe's show. He nailed every detail. At the time of the incident, he was essentially my boss, my commanding officer. I was just a pilot in his squadron. Are you familiar at all with how aircraft-carrier air operations work?

Probably not.

So, usually, we fly for about an hour, hour and a half, and then land. Then there's the next wave of folks that take off and do their mission, blah, blah, blah. That day, Dave Fravor was landing at the same time I was getting my gear on, and we crossed paths just after he'd seen it. I really don't want to get into what

Dave saw, specifically To summarize Fravor's eyewitness account to the *New York Times*, the pilot

reported seeing a large submerged object that was causing the ocean to churn. Hovering about 50 feet

above that churn, the 40-foot Tic Tac zipped erratically around the submerged object. Fravor observed

the Tic Tac as he banked his F/A-18 in a spiral descent to get a closer look. As he told the *Times*, the Tic

Tac "accelerated like nothing I've ever seen" and left him "pretty weirded out." , because I didn't see it

with my own eyeballs. But I told him, "**The Princeton**" — again, which has got a really good sophisticated radar — "is reporting that there's an object out there that they wanted us to see if we could find and, if we're able, track."

So, we go out to where our designated training area is. We're not necessarily looking for something, but the *Princeton* had a specific object that they wanted us to hunt, for lack of a better word. **And all of a sudden, I got this blip on my radar.**

The "Tic Tac."

The term "Tic Tac," I actually coined that. So, any time you heard the term, "**It looked like a 'Tic Tac' out there in the sky,**" I was the one that kind of coined that.

Was that named based on what you saw with your own eyes, or from looking at the screen on the camera?

No. I was more concentrated on looking at the FLIR Advanced Targeting Forward Looking Infrared

(ATFLIR) is an optical electric- and thermal-imaging system that was developed for U.S. Navy pilots by

Raytheon in the late 1990s < Caution-<https://fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/smart/atflir.htm> > , mainly for

the detection and identification of tactical targets and the delivery of autonomous precision targeting to

smart weapons. In the mid-2000s < Caution-

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Boeing_FA18_Super_Hornet_Engages_Moving_Targets_with_J

DAM.html > , as well as today < Caution-<https://www.raytheon.com/capabilities/products/atflir> > ,

ATFLIR was capable of detecting and tracking targets within a range of 40 nautical miles. . It was inside of 20 miles. You're not going to see it with your own eyes until probably 10 miles, and then you're not going to be able to visually track it until you're probably **inside of five miles, which is where Dave Fravor said that he saw it**. So, at that point I didn't see anything with my eyeballs. I was more concerned with tracking it, making sure that the videotape was on so that I could bring something back to the ship, so that the intel folks could dissect whatever it is that I captured.

The thing that stood out to me the most was **how erratic it was behaving**. And **what I mean by "erratic" is that its changes in altitude, air speed, and aspect were just unlike things that I've ever encountered before flying against other air targets. It was just behaving in ways that aren't physically normal**. That's what caught my eye. Because, **aircraft, whether they're manned or unmanned, still have to obey the laws of physics. They have to have some source of lift, some source of propulsion. The Tic Tac was not doing that. It was going from like 50,000 feet to, you know, a hundred feet in like seconds, which is not possible.**

Jack Sarfatti says "Not only is it possible, we understand the really elementary physics that explains it."

And it was doing that during your engagement too?

Yes. That was the thing that was the most interesting to me: how erratic this thing was **Jim Gillingham,**

an engineering consultant who worked on ATFLIR for Raytheon, suggested in an interview with

Intelligencer that "if there were several things in the sky to look at, but none were quite where the pilot

was trying to look," it might produce erratic results, a glitch he'd experienced using the ATFLIR to track

planes from the ground during development testing. "We ran into this when trying to get a lock and

there were two aircraft climbing out. (LAX has four parallel runways). Sometimes the image would

switch back and forth vigorously until we took steps to bias the lock some way." . If it was obeying

physics like a normal object that you would encounter in the sky — an aircraft, or a cruise missile, or some sort of special project that the government didn't tell you about — that would have made more sense to me. The part that drew our attention was how it wasn't behaving within the normal laws of physics. You're up there flying, like, "Okay. It's not behaving in a manner that's predictable or is normal by how flying objects physically move."

Jack Sarfatti: "It's time to get US pilots up to snuff on the simple physics that explains what they are seeing. I hate to say it, but the professors teaching physics to the military have some catching up to do and I can help them."

From looking at the video at the time and more recently, do you get a sense as to how much heat this thing was giving off?

Well, normally, you would see engines emitting a heat plume. This object was not doing that. The video shows a source of heat, but the normal signatures of an exhaust plume were not there.

There was no sign of propulsion.

You could not see the thing that the ATFLIR pod should pick up 100 percent of the time: the source of heat and exhaust that a normal object flying would give you

Former Navy F/A-

18 fighter pilot Vincent "Jell-O" Aiello expressed a similar reaction to the object in the FLIR1 video during a telephone interview. "Where it looks different to me is that it has no wings like an aircraft, and there's no perceptible heat signature from the engines or from intakes like an aircraft," he said. "If you're close enough to an actual aircraft and you're tracking it, you can see heat spots at different places either leading edges of wings, where it's hotter because of friction, or exhaust ports from where bleed air comes out, and, of course, the actual exhaust of the engines themselves."

. Does that make sense?

Jack "YES! It is exactly what we expect from metric engineered low-energy

low-speed Alcubierre-type warp drive using the peculiar "negative susceptibility tensor" electromagnetic properties of artificial meta-materials that are also quantum dot nano-scale artificial neural networks pumped externally into a Frohlich macro-quantum coherent "active matter" nonequilibrium quasi-stable state (Self Organizing Critical Point) feedback control loops between classical electromagnetic control fields and the Frohlich quantum order parameter of the meta-material's quantum dot network."

Yeah, it does.

Like, no method of propulsion or exhaust — and **the exhaust part of it was the thing that kind of made me raise my eyebrows** and be like, "Okay, this is interesting."

Were you approaching the Tic Tac head-on? Some people have suggested **The main source**

for this theory is a longtime contributor to the *Skeptical Inquirer*, retired Air Force Major James

McGaha, whose primary flight experience, per his bio with the skeptic's group < Caution-

https://centerforinquiry.org/speakers/mcgaha_james/ > , is with large C-130 military transport

aircraft. Not fighter jets, in other words, nor their instruments. **that the Tic Tac's rapid leftward**

movement toward the end of the video was actually the result of your F/A-18 banking to the right and dragging the camera along with it.

We were pointed nose-on to it. Maybe 10 to 20 degrees of azimuth. Azimuth is a horizontal angular measurement between a fixed direction, which in this flight navigation case is straight-ahead of the aircraft, and an object or location. In aviation, azimuth is paired with a vertical angular measurement called altitude, which should not be confused with the more common use of the word as a synonym for elevation. , either left or right.

Ergo, when the object kind of darts away to the left—

I was not aggressively maneuvering the aircraft in the manner that would make the FLIR pod would do that. Underwood's recollections on this were corroborated by Steven T. Cummings, a former technical director for Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems who worked on ATFLIR in its R&D phase and reviewed the FLIR1 video for this story. That said, Cummings made a point of adding that he will remain skeptical about most of the *Nimitz* UFO witness' accounts until the military releases more electronic data from the incident. . But look: At that point, I did not actually see the object aggressively accelerate to the left, as the video shows, to actually prove that.

Because you were at a distance where you couldn't make visual contact with your own eyes—
Right.

And so what's happening in the video is a little ambiguous as a result.

Right. Yeah. And that part kind of sucks, because I can't confirm that the object aggressively accelerated that way. But I have my feelings, based off of my experience with my equipment — and also just logic, when it comes to, you know, physics.

I want to ask you some questions based on theories that America's armchair skeptics have put forward — like whether it was birds, or whether it was some sort of thermal weather event. I mean, I'm sure you have had enough flight time that you've seen birds.

Yup. Birds normally fly close to the surface of the ground. So, for example, you're not going to see birds flying at 5,000 feet. You're going to see them more down at like 2,000 feet and below, like down to the surface. That's just kind of how birds normally operate. And they're typically not alone. So you can you can physically see them, in a flock or whatever. You don't see birds at 5,000 or 10,000 or 20,000 feet. That's just not how birds operate. So birds are out of the question.

And just so that I anticipate your next question: There are weather balloons that people launch, but **this was not a weather balloon** — because a balloon, it just ascends and floats from low to high altitude; it doesn't behave erratically. I mean, it's just a damn balloon. So that was out of the question.

It wasn't — to the best of my knowledge — a cruise missile or any other kind of test aircraft that we possibly may have not known about, just because of the way it was behaving. Like I said, it was just very erratic. **It would go from like 50 feet off the ground, which when you're out**

in the open ocean, you know, off the coast of San Diego, it looked like it was just hovering over the water. But there was no method of propulsion that was keeping it airborne: no wings, no heat, keeping it airborne or aloft.

Have you ever seen a weather event on an ATFLIR?

I would say if I captured this object on my sensors independently, like I was the only one that saw it or tracked it, I might have blown it off as something like a weather event. But the amount of people and sensors from other independent sources who found it — given the time period Dave Fravor saw it, and an hour and a half later I went out and saw it, and we captured basically an object with the same description — leads me to believe that **a weather event would be unlikely.**

Did it surprise you or provide any kind of relief seeing the Navy officially declare the Tic Tac video genuine

Before the *New York Times* vetted and published the FLIR1 video, the short clip floated around samizdat-style on various online UFO forums, a situation that had led

skeptics < Caution-[https://www.metabunk.org/2004-uss-nimitz-tic-tac-ufo-flir-footage-](https://www.metabunk.org/2004-uss-nimitz-tic-tac-ufo-flir-footage-flir1.t9190/#post-214103)

[flir1.t9190/#post-214103](https://www.metabunk.org/2004-uss-nimitz-tic-tac-ufo-flir-footage-flir1.t9190/#post-214103) > and “galaxy brain” conspiracy theorists < Caution-

https://www.reddit.com/r/UFOs/comments/akevcb/highly_suspicious_first_upload_of_nimitz_flir1

/ > to suspect that the video was a hoax perpetrated by the first known group to host the video on its

servers, a German 3-D animation company called Vision Unlimited < Caution-[https://www.vision-](https://www.vision-unlimited.de/)

[unlimited.de/](https://www.vision-unlimited.de/) > . In an interview with a German paranormal-news website < Caution-

[https://www.grenzwissenschaft-aktuell.de/nimitz-ufo-video-trace-to-film-production-company-leads-](https://www.grenzwissenschaft-aktuell.de/nimitz-ufo-video-trace-to-film-production-company-leads-to-mysterious-dead-end20171230/)

[to-mysterious-dead-end20171230/](https://www.grenzwissenschaft-aktuell.de/nimitz-ufo-video-trace-to-film-production-company-leads-to-mysterious-dead-end20171230/) > , Vision Unlimited manager Philip Schneider said the video was

not its work product, but could not explain why its servers were hosting it all the way back in 2007.

and a genuine UAP when that happened in the *Washington Post* < Caution-

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2019/09/18/those-ufo-videos-are-real-navy-says-please-stop-saying-ufo/> > **last September?**

No, not surprised. Validation for sure.

This might be a good time to talk about what the mood was on the *Nimitz* after all of this.

Once I landed, I saw one of my buddies from my sister squadron. He said, “Hey, did you see something out there too?” in a very jokey manner. And I was like, “Actually, MFer, because I know you want to make fun of me, I got it here on video.” Although, I didn’t say “MFer.” I said the actual term. He’s a good friend of mine, so it was in jest. We popped the tapes into the playback machine. I’m like, “Here, this is where it is.”

Those little video cuts In a podcast interview < Caution-

<https://youtu.be/CAWNDSiiffw?t=3768> > earlier this year, Sean Cahill (*Princeton’s* Chief-Master-at-

Arms) recalled that the name of this shortened FLIR1 video, the only version that the public has seen, was named “14November_condensed or something like that.” As Cahill told < Caution-
<https://youtu.be/CAWNDSiiffw?t=3789> > the podcast’s host, Alejandro Rojas, the video file was shared widely by crew members of the *Nimitz* and the *Princeton* using the carrier group’s low-bandwidth, circa 2004 Secret Internet Protocol Router Network < Caution-
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SIPRNet> > (SIPRNet), before much later being published by the New York Times in December 2017. — that you see of my FLIR recording — were taken there at the intelligence center. What they do with it from there, I don’t have a whole lot to deal with.

When I was still in my flight gear, so probably within about 20 minutes or so, I spoke to someone that I assume was from NORAD. I described it exactly as I just told you. I didn’t get debriefed. The interesting thing was, normally, if you see something out in the middle of the ocean that’s a test project, we would get debriefed on it, one-on-one, in a dark room. Whether it’s from the folks at Edwards test site Since the

end of World War II, Edwards Air Force Base has been one of the premiere testing sites for new U.S. military aircraft, and later home to NASA’s Armstrong Flight Research Center for the testing of advanced spacecraft. Naturally, Edwards has been a perennial subject of American UFO lore — including an extended October 7, 1965 sighting < Caution-
<https://archive.org/details/UFOOverEdwardsAFB> > in which base personnel struggled for over five hours to identify a series of mystery objects invading their airspace. Some fun, less intuitive trivia: The base also has its own folklore about a desert Bigfoot creature they call Yucca Man < Caution-
<https://longreads.com/2018/04/25/the-known-unknown-ales-of-the-yucca-man/> > . or something like that. “Hey, yes, we were testing a project. This is what you saw.” Without going into great detail, it will be like, “Yes. This is project ‘Umptysquatch’” and, basically, “This is what you saw. **Don’t talk about it.**”

That never happened, which leads me to think that it was not a government project A
former fighter pilot currently working with the Tailhook Association, who spoke on
condition of anonymity, corroborated this idea that the lack of a formal debrief for
Underwood describing a top-secret aircraft would be suggestive of something more
unusual than a classified test-flight program. .

Or, at least, not one—

Not one that they wanted to give any acknowledgment of. And, you know, I've got top-secret clearance with a ton of special-project clearances. So, it's not like I wasn't cleared to know. But, as I'm sure you've found in your research, to have clearance to know something, you have to have both the clearance that it's elevated to and you have to have the "need to know" it. And, clearly, whatever it was, if it was a government project, I did not need to know.

Yeah. Understood. Here's something I'm curious about, because of this NORAD aspect: Did it come up that this telephone debriefing was maybe involved with something called an Operations Event Incident Report or NORAD's OPREP-3 reporting system?

Documents made public via the Freedom of Information Act, alongside other government documents including < Caution-http://ufos-documenting-the-evidence.blogspot.com/2016/06/oprep-3-classified-us-military_8.html > "Air Force Instruction 10-206 Operational Reporting" (AFI 10-206) published by the Secretary of the United States Air Force (SEC-USAF) on October 15th, 2008, have indicated that a US military-wide secured reporting channel dubbed OPREP-3 for "operational report category 3 Event/Incident" have become a primary means of delivering realtime information on UFO incidents up the national security chain of command, from the service members tracking the object up through to the White House. Documents released via FOIA have shown < Caution-<http://ufos-documenting-the-evidence.blogspot.com/2016/06/oprep-3-classified-us-military.html> > the OPREP-3 channel used to deliver information about a spate of Oct, 30th, 1975, UFO events at Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Michigan, and overlapping sightings at Loring Air Force Base in Maine, among others.

Honestly, Matt, I have no idea. Like like what level up to who I was talking to. I just wanted to answer them. I was just basically handed a telephone and said, "Hey. Answer these questions."

Fair enough. So, Between talking to the NORAD guy and Fravor going public, there's a several-year period where this is just like a thing that happened in your life. Did it come up very often at all?

There would be associations. I would be sitting at lunch five years later with some of my colleagues. Rumors tend to have legs. "Hey, you were out on the *Nimitz* in '04. Someone told me about some alien spacecraft." And I'm like, "Well, (1) the video that you see is my video. And no, I've never said that this is what I think it was or speculate as to what I think it was. That's not my job. But I saw something. **And it was also seen, via eyeballs, by both my commanding officer, Dave Fravor, and the Marine Corps Hornet squadron commanding officer who was out there as well.**"

When did you find out Fravor was going to go public? Did a lot of people approach you during that reporting or afterward?

It's funny, seeing your boss's name and face on the news, given what he was putting out there. You know, obviously, our encounter happened in 2004 — so a while back — but everything that Dave has put out there in the interviews is absolutely, 100 percent, exactly what happened on that day. And we're still good friends to this day, so I started texting him. We had about a two-hour-long phone call and I'd be like, "Dude. Like what made this pop up?" Like, "Where was this like, you know, 12, 14 years ago?" Now it's 15 years ago. And, I guess, that was when the Pentagon released — whatever project they called it. I can't even remember it.

AATIP.

Yeah. AATIP The Pentagon's Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP) ostensibly ran from 2007 to 2012 with a budget of about \$22 million. It was preceded by, and may have overlapped with, another Defense Intelligence Agency program, dubbed the Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Applications Program (AAWSAP), with a wider and weirder purview < Caution-
<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/20797/the-pentagon-paid-for-these-reports-on-warp-drive-extra-dimensions-anti-gravity-and-more> > that included "dark energy and the manipulation of extra dimensions < Caution-
https://media.lasvegasnow.com/nxsglobal/lasvegasnow/document_dev/2018/05/04/Warp_Drive_Dark_Energy_1525479960070_41686974_ver1.0.pdf > ." In October 2017 < Caution-
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/18/insider/secret-pentagon-ufo-program.html?hpw&rref=times-insider&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=well-region%C2%AEion=bottom-well&WT.nav=bottom-well&_r=0 > , New York *Times* reporter Ralph Blumenthal and longtime UFO researcher Leslie Kean met with a former employee of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (OUSDI), Luis Elizondo, who had been involved with AATIP — and depending on which reporters and low-level Pentagon spokespeople you care to trust, may have led the program. Working with several other individuals from the U.S. military and intelligence world, and however improbably with Blink-182 front man Tom DeLonge, Elizondo and the *Times* brought news of AATIP — and with it, David Fravor's account of the Tic Tac — to the public that December. The extent of the Pentagon's official involvement declassifying this material is unfortunately still one of the more frustrating, unresolved, and contentious aspects of this story two years later. .

Did the New York Times reach out to you? Ask for background just to confirm anything?
No.

Interesting.

Not that I really care. At no point did I want to speculate as to what I thought this thing was — or be associated with, you know, “alien beings” and “alien aircraft” and all that stuff. I’m like, “No. I do not want to be part of that community.” It is just what we call a UFO. I couldn’t identify it. It was flying. And it was an object. It’s as simple as that.

Yeah.

I’ll let the nerds, like, do the math on what it was likely to be. I just happened to be the person that brought back the video.

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Sent from iCloud

(B)(6)

From: Gradisher, Joseph F CIV USN DCNO N2N6 (USA)

Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 9:22 AM

To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (B)(6)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Gough, Susan L
(Sue) CIV OSD PA (USA); [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (B)(6)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: Popular Mechanics Article

Signed By: [REDACTED] (B)(6)

All,

Wanted to make sure you were aware/saw the lengthy Popular Mechanics article from over the weekend (attached below).

Navy/ONI mentioned a few times... but the focus of the story is DOD/DIA/AATIP.

DOD Spokesperson Sue Gough is the only official spokesperson quoted...

Regards,

Joe

Joe Gradisher
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret)
N2N6 Strategic Engagements

(B)(6)

Inside the Pentagon's Secret UFO Program

Popular Mechanics, 14 February 2020... by Tim McMillan

The government can't keep its story straight about its involvement with UFO research. After a yearlong investigation, we bust open the files, break through the noise, and reveal the definitive, staggering truth.

As I sit in a small cafe in the shadow of the ancient Roman gates in Trier, Germany, talking to a person whose credibility seems beyond reproach, but who will only agree to talk to me if provide absolute assurances of anonymity, I can't help but feel like I'm trapped in a Dan Brown novel. The Da Vinci Code, however, never dealt with unidentified flying objects.

“Was it about UFOs? Of course,” this person whispers with a grin of melodrama.

After almost a year of investigating the U.S. government’s interest in UFOs, what they’ve just said should neither be shocking, nor revelatory. Unbeknownst to them, they’ve only further confirmed what over a dozen other people with backgrounds inside the government and the now-defunct Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies (BAASS) have already admitted to me.

Just like the fictional Robert Langdon, the path to understanding these mysterious government programs has taken me through the catacombs of informal secret societies, whose surprising memberships include accomplished professionals from the military, aerospace, academic, medical, and intelligence communities.

Though diverse or abstinent in how they define exactly what it all means, each of these enigmatic characters shares one common belief: unidentified flying objects are neither myth nor figment of overactive imaginations. With absolute conviction, they’ve all told me that UFOs are real.

Now, after two years of scant details and a myriad of contradictory statements, *Popular Mechanics* is ripping open the U.S. government’s massive UFO problem. What follows is a deep, unprecedented well of information that’s only been known by a very small select group of insiders—until now.

Part I. The Disclosure

On December 16, 2017, the New York Times disclosed that the Pentagon had secretly funded research into UFOs through the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program, or AATIP. As if the U.S. government quietly investigating UFOs wasn’t enough, for the first time, the public also got a chance to see three videos captured by the U.S. Navy showing what has been claimed to be “Unidentified Aerial Phenomena,” or UAP.

In an instant, UFOs were no longer relegated to society’s nihilistically curious, and for the first time in decades, droves of the mainstream public suddenly found themselves peering skyward with wonder.

But almost as quickly as the excitement of mysterious black budget UFO programs crashed ashore, so, too, came vexing waves of criticism, confusion, and controversy.

From the onset, disarray and debate raged on whether the second “A” in AATIP officially stood for Aerospace or Aviation, with the former “Aerospace” eventually proving to be correct. Adding to the chaos, an entirely different program moniker emerged: the Advanced Aerospace Weapons Systems Applications Program, or AAWSAP. For over two years, no one has been able to adequately explain whether AAWSAP and AATIP were two separate programs, or the same intuitive under two separate names.

To muddle matters more, a revolving door of Pentagon spokespeople have successfully issued waves of contradictory statements about what the Department of Defense (DoD) did or didn’t do when it came to studying UFOs.

Initially, the Pentagon said, AATIP had indeed investigated UFOs under the leadership of Luis Elizondo, a former senior member of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (OUSDI). Eventually, in a complete reversal of official stances, the Pentagon’s newly crowned UFO point person, Senior Strategic Planner and Spokesperson Susan Gough, recently told *The Black Vault*, “neither AAWSAP nor AATIP were UAP related,” “Elizondo was not the director of AATIP,” and he didn’t have “assigned responsibilities” within the program.

In some consolation to the UFO faithful, the DoD has consistently been willing to say they consider the curious objects shown in the 2017 videos to be unexplained UAP. What exactly that means, however, has been open for interpretation and debate.

After months of conducting interviews and uncovering previously undisclosed materials, Popular Mechanics is revealing here that the U.S. government does indeed have a definite interest in UFOs.

Provided, of course, that nobody says it out loud.

Part II. The Seeds

The path to truly understanding the Pentagon's current UFO problems doesn't begin in 2008 with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the AAWSAP, but rather, a decade earlier and some 2,000 miles from the nation's capital at the doorstep of a billionaire Nevada entrepreneur.

Robert T. Bigelow, the owner of Budget Suites of America and founder of the space technology company Bigelow Aerospace, has never shied away from amplifying his interest in UFOs. In a 2017 interview, Bigelow told CBS's 60 Minutes he was "absolutely convinced" aliens exist, before passionately declaring, "I don't give a damn!" when asked if it was risky to publicly say he believes in UFOs and aliens.

In 1995, four years before founding his aerospace startup, Bigelow established the National Institute for Discovery Sciences (NIDS). From the company's cached website, NIDS described itself as "a privately funded science institute engaged in research of aerial phenomena, animal mutilations, and other related anomalous phenomena."

The cached website of the now-defunct National Institute for Discovery Sciences.

Before ultimately disbanding in 2004, NIDS conducted research into a host of various paranormal topics, such as cryptid encounters, cattle mutilations, and especially UFOs. The group's most recognized research was the investigation of a purported paranormal Utah homestead owned by Bigelow called Skinwalker Ranch, which would later play a significant role in the DIA's UFO interest.

In a 2018 interview with New York magazine, former Nevada Senator Harry Reid told an interesting tale about a curious letter Bigelow received from a senior official from a federal national-security agency. "I'm interested in talking to you, Mr. Bigelow. I have an interest in what you've been working on. I want to go to your ranch in Utah," Reid recounted.

After vetting the letter's author, the individual Reid described as a "very low-key scientist" was granted a pass to visit Bigelow's ranch. In a lecture at "UFO MegaCon" in 2019, KLAS Las Vegas reporter George Knapp told the crowd these events occurred in 2007, and claims the person, described by Knapp as a "DIA scientist," had an "experience" while visiting the supposed paranormal site.

In an interview with researcher Joe Murgia, former AAWSAP contractor and astrophysicist Eric Davis shared what colleagues had told him of the DIA scientist's experience:

"In the living room of the former NIDS double wide observation trailer/staff quarters. A 3D object appeared in mid-air in front of him and changed shape like a changing topological figure. It went from pretzel-shaped to Möbius strip shaped. It was 3D and multi-colored. Then it disappeared."

According to Reid, whatever happened at Skinwalker was enough to convince the DIA to seriously investigate paranormal and UFO phenomena. "Something should be done about this. Somebody should study it." I was convinced he was right," Reid told New York.

In an interview with Popular Mechanics, Hal Puthoff, a former subcontractor for the AATIP, confirms the scientist's visit, but was unsure how significant a role it played in the origins of AAWSAP.

"Reid is correct that early on there was a DIA scientist who expressed interest in hearing of the Skinwalker Ranch and did visit," Puthoff says. "The degree to which this influenced initiation of the AAWSAP Program, however, or was just a side issue, I don't know."

While we don't know how pivotal the Skinwalker visit was in the formation of the DIA's UFO studies, we do know AAWSAP and AATIP were already taking shape almost a year before funding was established and the solicitation was issued.

Navy fighter pilot Cdr. David Fravor has arguably become the face of the famous UFO encounters by the Nimitz Strike Carrier Group, it was actually Marine Lt. Col. Douglas "Cheeks" Kurth who was first directed to investigate the strange airborne contacts that radar operators captured in November 2004.

On his LinkedIn profile, Kurth indicates he worked as a program manager for Bigelow Aerospace Advanced Space Studies, LLC (BAASS) until June 2013. Interestingly, Kurth began working for BAASS in December 2007—a month before Bigelow officially established his LLC in January 2008. That might be because Nevada state records show BAASS was technically a subsidiary of another business owned by Bigelow: International Space Hardware Services (ISHS). According to the Nevada Secretary of State's Office, ISHS was incorporated on October 31, 2007.

Puthoff, who entered the BAASS fold in 2008, tells Popular Mechanics he was aware that Kurth was involved in the Nimitz events in 2004, but he didn't believe BAASS specifically recruited Kurth because of it. "I think that it was just because of his experience he reached out to join [BAASS]," says Puthoff, who later founded and now runs the advanced concepts research institute Earthtech International.

Puthoff says he believes the DIA had expressed a need for what would become AAWSAP in 2007, but isn't sure if the organization ever made a formal request. "I think that anything from 2007 was likely quite informal—discussions, letters, emails—but I'm not certain," he says.

Regardless, roughly six months after BAASS opened up shop, with the support of late senators Ted Stevens and Daniel Inouye, Reid set up funding for AATIP and the AAWSAP contract in the Supplemental Appropriations Bill of July 2008. "It would be black money, we wouldn't have a big debate on the Senate floor over it," Reid told New York. "The purpose of it was to study aerial phenomena. The money was given, a directive was given to the Pentagon, to put this out to bid, which they did."

On August 18, 2008, the contracting arm of the DIA issued a 32-page solicitation/contract/order for commercial items for the AAWSAP. When bidding closed three weeks later on September 5, as the sole bidder, BAASS was awarded \$10 million dollars for the guaranteed first year, of a five-year option, for the contract.

On September 13, 2008, Bigelow Aerospace began listing career opportunities with BAASS in 14 different disciplines related to aerospace and research sciences.

Absent from the AAWSAP solicitation is any language related to UFOs or UAP. Instead, as originally outlined in the July Supplemental Appropriations Bill, the "primary focus is on breakthrough technologies and applications that create discontinuities in currently evolving technology trends. The focus is not on extrapolations of current aerospace technology."

In past interviews, Reid has indicated the interested parties at the DIA felt it prudent to avoid any language that might cause someone to realize the underlying focus of the AATIP program was UFOs. According to Reid, a representative with the DIA told him, "What I will do is prepare something for you that anyone can look at it that wants to, it's strictly science."

On multiple occasions over the past two years, both the government and former contractors have used the terms AATIP and AAWSAP almost interchangeably. This has caused significant confusion of whether AATIP and AAWSAP were two separate programs, or the same activity under differing names. In a recent statement, Pentagon spokesperson Susan Gough told longtime researcher John Greenewald, “[AATIP] was the name of the overall program. [AAWSAP] was the name of the contract that DIA awarded for the production of technical reports under AATIP.”

While all sources associated with the programs confirm Gough’s statement with Popular Mechanics—AAWSAP was the contract component of the broader umbrella program dubbed ATTIP—they dismiss the latter sentiment expressed by Gough that “neither AATIP nor AAWSAP were UAP related.”

The evidence collected here overwhelmingly suggests the government was indeed studying UFOs and not, as the Pentagon has said, “investigating foreign advanced aerospace weapons system applications with future technology projections over the next 40 years, and to create a center of expertise on advanced aerospace technologies.”

Part III. The Report

In July 2009, BAASS provided a comprehensive report to the DIA at the conclusion of the first-year option of the AAWSAP contract. The 494-page “Ten Month Report,” as it’s called, is chock full of strategic plans, project summaries, data tables, charts, descriptions of biological field effects, physical characteristics, methods of detection, theoretical capabilities, witness interviews, photographs, and case synopses—each one entirely, explicitly about unexplained aerial phenomena.

Throughout the report, “the sponsor” is mentioned, however, the DIA is never explicitly named.

The first pages list the names of every contractor working for BAASS with appropriate security clearances to have access to the program. Amongst dozens of credentialed names, some of those listed are very familiar to the UFO community, including Puthoff, Davis, Jacques Vallee, and Colm Kelleher. Regardless of one’s existing opinions of the UFO phenomena, the sheer volume of content in the BAASS Ten Month Report is astounding.

Some of the notable content of the 2009 BAASS Ten Month Report includes:

- Overview of the BAASS Physics Division’s efforts to conduct research on advanced aerospace vehicles, including the development of standardization for measurement of physical effects and signatures associated with UAP.
- Overview of BAASS research for measuring and gleaning the effects on biological organisms from UAP.
- Mention of Skinwalker Ranch in Utah as a “possible laboratory for studying other intelligences and possible interdimensional phenomena.”
- Strategic plans to organize a series of intellectual debate forums targeted to broad audiences pertaining to the “potential disclosure of an extraterrestrial presence.”
- Plans to create a “medical physiological UAP effects program.”
- Request for Project Blue Book files that have not been made public.
- Mention of BAASS program dubbed “Project Northern Tier,” which involved securing documents related to instances where dozens of UFOs flew over restricted airspaces of facilities housing nuclear weapons.

- A possible UAP landing reported to BAASS by the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) and its STAR Team (rapid response field investigators funded by BAASS in March 2009).

- Project databases of UAP-related materials compiled through various partnerships, and the intent to expand these databases by coordinating with foreign governments.

- Summaries of multiple UAP events both inside the U.S. and in foreign countries.

- Photographs of UAPs provided by various sources, including foreign governments.

From cover to cover, the BAASS report references the government's new buzzword for UFOs: UAP. However, nowhere could Popular Mechanics find a single reference to foreign (terrestrial) advanced aerospace weapon systems, or projected technological innovations based on current industry trends.

Sources tell Popular Mechanics the BAASS Ten Month report was only a sample of the materials the organization provided to the DIA. "Monthly reports were being sent to the Pentagon, in addition to annual program updates, that were all about UAP or anomalous phenomena," says one former BAASS contractor.

Chris Bartel, a security officer and investigator for BAASS (later Bigelow Aerospace) from 2010 to 2018, confirms the accounts of former BAASS and AATIP employees with Popular Mechanics. He says he indeed encountered some fairly dramatic paranormal events while working at the Skinwalker Ranch, and says he'd also heard mumblings of BAASS being interested in studying paranormal activity in hopes it could lead to technology research. However, Bartel says he didn't know anything about AAWSAP or AATIP until last fall. "I was a bit taken back, to say the least," he says.

Though unaware of any formal contract with the DIA, Bartel confirms that reports generated about paranormal events on the ranch were being faxed to both Bigelow and the Pentagon on a regular basis. ("I would hate to think my experiences up there were somehow manipulated by outside man-made forces," Bartel says. "I truly believe the ranch to be hallowed Native land.")

Some have suggested the "paranormal" events associated with Skinwalker Ranch or AAWSAP could be associated with secret and highly advanced weapons testing. While Bartel says it's possible weapons were being tested, nothing he observed was consistent with his experiences of top secret testing.

Puthoff also says he saw no evidence that BAASS was involved in weapons testing during his tenure with the organization—"a statement I'm certain Mr. Bigelow would support," he says. (Bigelow could not be reached for comment.)

Part IV. The Secrets

The revelations in the BAASS report beg the question: Why is the government now insistent it never studied UFOs, and why aren't these documents being discussed or made available through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests?

Individuals who worked on the AATIP program say the current uncertainty and confusion was by design and involved a dizzying shell game that's entirely consistent with how black budget intelligence programs are run. "What you're dealing with is the very core of government secrecy and how things they absolutely don't ever want to discuss are kept hidden away," one former AATIP contractor tells Popular Mechanics.

Sources say the key to understanding current denials of UFO studies in AATIP comes from a phrase stamped on each page of the BAASS Ten Month Report obtained by Popular Mechanics:

"The information is proprietary and cannot be disseminated or used without prior written consent from the Operating Manager of BAASS."

According to several former AATIP contractors, the "product" being produced for the DIA was technical reports on exotic and potential "game-changing" aerospace technologies, and the manner of determining what areas these radical airborne breakthroughs might emerge was through the research of UFOs.

In exchange, not only would the DIA get the agreed-upon technical reports, but it would also gain access to the extensive research BAASS was gathering on UFOs. While the DIA had access to the volumes of UFO data, the materials were actually commercial property of BAASS, as a subsidiary of Bigelow Aerospace.

The idea of using an aerospace research project as a cover for a secret UFO program may seem unscrupulous. "But this all rings very familiar," Neil Gordon, an investigator with the Project on Government Oversight, tells Popular Mechanics.

Gordon, whose area of expertise is in federal contractor misconduct, contractor accountability, and government privatization, says running the "commercial in confidence" program through AATIP is consistent with how the DoD deals with programs it wants to keep secret. "Whether it's right or not is another story," Gordon says, "but everything sounds very common for how black budget programs run."

The DIA may have had extensive access to the UFO materials, but because all of the data technically belonged to BAASS, under the Economic Espionage Act of 1996, disclosing or releasing proprietary materials provided to the government in confidence is a federal crime. Essentially, the DIA's UFO program was set up to circumvent FOIA requests and avoid having to discuss UFOs publicly.

Out of concern for providing Popular Mechanics access to the 2009 BAASS Ten Month Report, the person who made these materials available did so only under the guarantee of anonymity. It's worth noting this person is not a current government employee, nor were they involved with BAASS or the AAWSAP contract.

"Unfortunately, the government attempting to evade FOIA by contracting out its responsibilities is nothing new," Josh Budray, an attorney who specializes in FOIA and First Amendment cases, tells Popular Mechanics. "Both federal and state FOIA statutes strive to eliminate such obvious gamesmanship—avoiding transparency and disclosure obligations by contracting out functions—but whether they are successful in doing so is an entirely different story."

Davis, the astrophysicist and former AAWSAP contractor, says his work on the AATIP program was entirely consistent with all of the technological intelligence programs he'd previously worked on over the last 30-plus years. "Indeed, science is applied, but right now there's not enough data on UAP to make examining it a scientific endeavor. It's an intelligence issue, not a scientific endeavor," he says.

Puthoff, meanwhile, says BAASS produced "stacks of material to the ceiling," but because of the way things were done, he was surprised to hear any of it had become public. "To be honest, I didn't think this stuff would ever see the light of day," he says.

When reached for comment, Colm Kelleher, the former Deputy Director of BAASS, said, "I am unable to discuss this topic." Multiple other requests to Bigelow Aerospace for comment went unanswered.

The entire manner in which the DIA partnership allegedly operated raises an important question: Could the reason for the Pentagon's recent denials of AATIP or AAWSAP conducting UFO research be the result of the current DoD administration being naive to the program's underlying and commercially secret hidden purpose? It seems like a plausible theory ... if it wasn't for something else Popular Mechanics uncovered.

Part V. The Admission

Last year, Steven Aftergood of the Federation of American Scientists obtained via FOIA request and published a January 2018 letter that the DIA Congressional Relations Division sent to members of Congress. In the letter, the DIA provided "a list of all products produced under the AATIP contract for the DIA to publish." The referenced list includes 38 technical papers, called Defense Intelligence Reference Documents (DIRDs), which cover a range of advanced, exotic, and theoretical aerospace topics.

Given what's been said about the commercially confidential nature of AATIP, the phrase "for the DIA to publish" may be a critical play on words. Nevertheless, a source with access to the materials provided Popular Mechanics with a copy of a previously unreleased technical paper listed as one of AATIP's products.

While the DIA refers to the paper as "Field Effects on Biological Tissue," the original title for the submitted paper appears to actually have been "Clinical Medical Acute & Subacute Field Effects on Human Dermal & Neurological Tissues." According to the study's introduction, the paper is an examination of "clinical medical signs and symptoms and biophysics of injury known and expected from near-field (mostly ultra-high), NIEMR Microwave, Thermal, from unintended exposure to anomalous systems." You can read the entire study below.

In light of the cumbersome clinical language, just a cursory scan reveals the entire focus was on examining injuries that may have occurred after contact with UFOs or UAP. In fact, the very term "UFO" appears 16 times in the report; the word "anomalous" is used 27 times (most often with the word "aircraft," "aviation," or "aerospace" immediately following); and the phrase "Advanced Aerospace Systems Applications Program" is mentioned in bold on four occasions.

Popular Mechanics spoke with the study's author, Christopher "Kit" Green, a forensic clinician and neuroscientist. Green was surprised to learn his research paper had become publicly known, because he was under the impression it was never included in the distributed set, nor was it finally peer-reviewed.

Green confirms his paper wasn't cited correctly in the letter to Congress, however, he says the 54-page document Popular Mechanics obtained appeared to be the same paper he was requested to provide as a product of AAWSAP.

"This focused on forensically assessing accounts of injuries that could have resulted from claimed encounters with UAP," says Green. "I didn't work for BAASS, other than as a contractor for my paper, and I wasn't a part of AAWSAP. However, it is my understanding this program was a UFO study that outwardly was not supposed to look like it had anything to do with UFOs."

Green cautions some past speculations about his paper were inaccurate, including the claims it was an effort to understand or reverse-engineer UAP technology. Green also stresses that while his work focused on encounters with unknown or unidentified aerial objects, all of the injuries he assessed could be accounted for by known terrestrial means, and did not provide any evidence for extraterrestrial or non-human technologies.

Could the 38 technical reports BAASS produced for AATIP represent what it determined accounted for UAP?

"Many of the topics could be called 'dual-use' given that, say, papers on advanced plasma propulsion and invisibility cloaking could apply to our own advanced aerospace development as well as possibly some UAPs," says Puthoff. But his "spacetime metric

engineering paper, the warp drive and wormhole papers, and specifically the Statistical Drake Equation paper are essentially applicable only to UAPs.”

Davis, who worked with Puthoff and authored four of the DIRDs, offers a particularly intriguing detail about the DIA’s 38 reference papers.

“This wasn’t focused on whether or not [UAP] are real. It’s already been well established that UAP are real by a preponderance of evidence. Some classified and some proprietary [that] I can’t talk about,” he says.

Instead of investigating if UAP are real, the 38 technical papers for the AAWSAP contract were also an intelligence assessment to measure just how far advanced UAP could be from current and projected scientific understandings. “Me, Hal [Puthoff], and an aerospace executive who had access to materials worked on that assessment for the DIA,” Davis says.

Ultimately, aside from the wealth of BAASS proprietary evidence, Green’s study alone—which the DIA told Congress was a product of AATIP that it would “be happy to provide upon direct request”—seems to completely dispute the Pentagon’s recent claims that neither AATIP or AAWSAP were related to UFOs.

In an exchange of emails between Gough, the Pentagon spokesperson, and Swedish research Roger Glassal, which were provided and published by research analyst Keith Basterfield, Gough said AAWSAP commenced in the fiscal year (FY) 2008 with a designated \$10 million dollars of funding. Since the bid solicitation wasn’t issued until August 2008, we now know that Gough was mistaken, and the program actually began in FY2009, which began October 1, 2008.

In the same email exchange, Gough indicated the first 26 technical reports were completed in late 2009 and an additional \$12 million dollars was designated in the FY2010 Defense Appropriations Act for 12 additional reports. (Editor’s note: In the original email, Gough indicated “late 2008.” It’s assumed this was also said in error since BAASS didn’t receive the AAWSAP contract until September 2008 and Green’s technical paper is dated May 2009.)

From Gough:

“After an OSD/DIA review in late 2009, it was determined the reports were of limited value to DIA and there was a recommendation that upon completion of the contract the project could be transited to an agency or component better suited to oversee it.

Funding for the program at the DIA ended in 2012 and DoD elected not to continue the program after the work contracted under the FY2010 NDAA was completed.”

Indeed, every source Popular Mechanics spoke to for this story agrees the partnership between BAASS and AAWSAP had concluded by 2012.

But here’s where things get messy: Gough says when DIA funding dried up in 2012, the overarching AATIP program closed up shop as well. Every source we spoke to, however, says not only did AATIP not end in 2012, but the program is still ongoing to this day.

Core to the contention of whether or not the government maintained an interest after 2012 is the man the DoD says “had no responsibilities” with AAWSAP or AATIP: former senior Pentagon intelligence executive Luis Elizondo.

Who, exactly, is Elizondo? A patriotic whistleblower putting his reputation at stake for something he says the American public must know about? Or a huckster using his former position for his own benefit, as the Pentagon seemingly implies?

Part VI. The Leader

After serving a stint as a counterintelligence agent for the U.S. Army, in the late 1990s, Elizondo would be recruited into the ranks of the enigmatic U.S. intelligence community.

Elizondo's first stop as an intelligence operations specialist was running counterinsurgency and counternarcotics operations in Latin America. "We dealt with a lot of stuff, like coup d'états, black market terrorism, violent drug cartels, all that kind of stuff," Elizondo says.

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, Elizondo was then redirected toward East Asia, where he served as an advisor of a small intelligence unit assigned to support General James Mattis during his command of Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Task Force 58 (TF-58) in the War on Terrorism. In a case study published by the Naval War College in 2016, Lt. Col. Damian Spooner describes the analysis and products produced by intelligence sections under Gen. Mattis as being "indispensable" in driving TF-58 planning and operations.

Later, while continuing to support the U.S.-led war on terrorism, Elizondo, the son of a Cuban exile, found himself in Cuba dealing with some of the most dangerous terrorists in the world at Guantanamo Bay's infamous "Camp Seven," the prison constructed for the sole purpose of housing 14 "high-value detainees."

In early 2008, James Clapper, then the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, asked Elizondo to come to the Pentagon to help coordinate information sharing and partnership engagement being run by the Secretary of Defense's Office. Though the promise of cutting his daily commute in half was one of the biggest selling points, Elizondo's decision to set up shop at the Pentagon would end up putting him directly in the path of recruitment for a special program the DIA had just started running: AAWSAP.

Though the BAASS Ten Month Report includes an abundance of UAP information, nothing within the text contains any data or information provided by the U.S. government. Conversely, there are a number of requests made by BAASS for access to specific UAP information being held within the DoD and other U.S. agencies. Sources say this is key to understanding how Elizondo entered the picture.

"If they [BAASS] wanted access to info that I'm not saying does exist, but it might have been highly classified, you need someone who had the tickets to make sure the contractors weren't actually looking at Special Access Program (SAP) stuff thinking it was UFOs," says an intelligence official who is not authorized to speak on the record.

"Plus," the official tells Popular Mechanics, "I'm not saying it was, but they might have been looking into something that was of significant interest to foreign advisories and a high-value target for espionage. Bottom line, you needed a counterintel guy."

Elizondo tells Popular Mechanics that he never wanted to be a part of AATIP. However, as a senior official at OUSDI with a background in counterintelligence, he found himself being recruited into the ongoing UFO effort.

"In 2008," Elizondo says, "two guys came by my office and said, 'Are you Lue Elizondo?' The first thing I thought was, 'Oh no, what did I do?' They told me, 'You came highly recommended as a former senior CI guy with some background in advanced avionics.' Which is true—I worked some on the Open Skies Treaty. I worked with Raytheon, Boeing, and some other stuff. That was my portfolio."

Elizondo was told AATIP needed a counterintelligence support and security guy for a very special program. Within a month, after a series of meetings, Elizondo finally met with the then-director of AATIP, who asked him what seemed like a strange question at the time:

“What do you think about UFOs?”

Elizondo was flummoxed. “I was like, ‘What the hell?’ I thought it was a test or something. So I told the truth: I don’t. I don’t think about UFOs. I don’t know if they’re real or not. I don’t think about them. I’m too busy trying to catch terrorists and bad guys.”

Elizondo’s ambivalence was evidently exactly what those running the program wanted to hear. Soon enough, Elizondo joined AATIP. “Seriously, for awhile, I still didn’t know if it was a test,” he says. “It wasn’t until I started examining the security posture of the portfolio that I suddenly realized these things are really unidentified.”

Not long after Elizondo was on board, in June 2009, Sen. Harry Reid submitted a letter to then-Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn III requesting AATIP be granted restricted SAP status. Though ultimately denied, had Reid’s request been granted, it would have further tightened security and secrecy around AATIP.

Last year, KLAS Las Vegas reporter George Knapp published Reid’s letter showing Elizondo’s name on the list of “preliminary government personnel” who would have had access to AATIP. In addition to Elizondo, Reid, and the late Senator Daniel Inouye, seven other names of government employees (which have not been released) would have had access to the proposed AATIP SAP. Notably, only three “contractor personnel” made the cut.

According to a source with knowledge of the letter, the three contractor personnel Reid wanted to grant preliminary access to were Bigelow, Kelleher, and Puthoff. Puthoff confirms with Popular Mechanics that he was one of the three approved contractors on the list. The Pentagon later confirmed the letter published by Knapp was authentic.

Sources say the limited number of contractors listed with access is yet another breadcrumb left on the trail of secrecy showing AATIP was indeed slightly different from the AAWSAP contract.

According to multiple sources, including individuals working within the Pentagon—and confirmed by Elizondo—in 2010, when the DIA cut off funding for AATIP’s contract, a DIA program manager asked Elizondo if he would keep the UFO project running. “I wasn’t a DIA employee,” Elizondo says, “so I’d have to run it wearing my OSD hat at the Pentagon. We all agreed this was the best thing to do, so that’s what we did.”

By all accounts, Elizondo was now “bootstrapping” AATIP from the OUSDI, meaning he added the program to the list of his existing intelligence portfolios.

Popular Mechanics has learned the post-BAASS era of AATIP was an even more closely guarded program and consistent with how highly classified intelligence projects are conducted.

“Ninety percent of people don’t understand how the general government runs, and even less understand the intelligence community,” a former senior Special Operations and Intelligence Officer tells Popular Mechanics. “Because this program would have now been out of the Front Office, your guy [Elizondo] would have had the ability to muster up people from various areas of the Intelligence Community. You would have wanted to include the least possible, but best people for the specific mission. You could have had people from the DIA, ONI [Office of Naval Intelligence], and OSI [Office of Special Investigations] all working separately, but together on the same mission.”

Elizondo says when he took over the AATIP, he ran it like a traditional government effort. “We greatly reduced the number of contractors to just what we might have needed, but this was going to be government to government, looking on government systems at government data,” he says.

According to Elizondo, unlike most of the BAASS personnel, the post-2012 AATIP crew did have access to highly classified government information to adequately assess the situation. While the Pentagon denies that AATIP continued after 2012, Elizondo says the post-BAASS AATIP was not unsanctioned, and not just a group of government UFO enthusiasts. "Very, very few people in the building knew what we were doing, but the Front Office (Office of the Secretary of Defense) was in the loop," he says.

Popular Mechanics has learned the ONI was one of the major backers that wanted to see AATIP continued, which sources say is why the Navy has been so willing to take the most public lead on the UAP issue today.

Elizondo's critics have repeatedly asked an important question: If AATIP was such a secret program, why is Elizondo now talking about it publicly?

By denying AATIP SAP status back in 2009 and not ever officially blanketing it under a security classification, Popular Mechanics has learned that the government effectively allowed for the program itself to now be discussed.

"There's a lot they can't talk about, like sources, methods, etc., but the program itself is unclassified and fair game for public disclosure," a source with knowledge of the program tells Popular Mechanics. Elizondo confirms this is correct. "I've never once violated, nor am I willing to violate my security oaths, so anything I've discussed is indeed unclassified," he says.

In one of Elizondo's employee performance evaluations, which Popular Mechanics obtained, it lists his primary "mission goals" as managing and administering information, access controls, and security of national-level SAPs for the Secretary of Defense. Elizondo confirms his position allowed him access to the most highly secretive and reclusive programs being run by the U.S. "The stuff we were seeing was truly unidentified. It wasn't related to anything we were doing," he says.

In October 2017, Elizondo resigned from the DoD to join former Blink-182 frontman Tom DeLonge's UFO research group To the Stars Academy of Arts & Science, which would soon release the Navy's "Flir1" video to the world and properly kick off a ufological renaissance. Elizondo now works as the company's Director of Global Security and Special Programs.

Why did Elizondo leave his government job? Because he realized the Pentagon's top brass would never treat UAP with the importance they deserved. A senior Pentagon official tells Popular Mechanics they were aware that Elizondo briefed a White House intelligence aide and two senior aides to Mattis, then the Secretary of Defense, in the spring of 2017.

The official, who is not authorized to speak on the record, says the White House aide was uncomfortable with the prospect of UFOs being real. To their knowledge, the White House aide did not pass the information along. The aides to Mattis, meanwhile, acknowledged UFOs were a real issue, but they were concerned with the political optics should it ever come out that the Secretary of Defense had been briefed about them. Elizondo confirms the accuracy of these accounts. "I resigned only after multiple attempts to brief the Secretary [of Defense] failed," he previously told Popular Mechanics.

Finally, while the Pentagon has denied AATIP's existence after 2012 and that Elizondo was never involved in looking into UFOs, Popular Mechanics has obtained documentation that seems to unambiguously show AATIP was active after the closing of the BAASS AAWSAP contract, Elizondo was running this extension of AATIP, and the efforts to examine UFOs are still currently underway.

Though the documents were unclassified, they contained sensitive information, and the person sharing them did so only under the guarantee that Popular Mechanics would not make them publicly available. The person said they only were willing to share the materials to support Elizondo's claims, which they say have been unfairly challenged over the last two years. The individual, who is not a government employee, did approve the release of a small section from one of the documents showing the changing of responsibilities before Elizondo left the DoD.

Part VII. The Unknown

In June 2019, the Office of Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.), vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee's office, confirmed that closed door meetings on UAP have occurred. More recently, last December, when asked by Conway Daily Sun reporter Daymond Steer about the Navy UAP encounters, recent presidential candidate and current member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Sen. Michael Bennet, was cautious in saying he wouldn't share anything he'd learned on the Intelligence Committee. However, Bennet said, "Our guys are seeing stuff that's unidentified. They don't know what it is, I don't know what it is ... We're trying to learn more about it. The Air Force is trying to learn more about it."

Popular Mechanics has since learned in October 2019, staffers with the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Senate Armed Service Committee were briefed on current UAP issues. According to people with knowledge of these briefings, some former BAASS contractors and current AATIP leadership were in attendance.

Insiders also say this past year, during a closed-door meeting with the Senate Intelligence Committee, Brigadier General Richard Stapp, Director of the DoD Special Access Program Central Office, testified the mysterious objects being encountered by the military were not related to secret U.S. technology. The Pentagon did not respond to requests by Popular Mechanics to confirm Stapp's testimony before the Intelligence Committee.

In only the second time publicly discussing the event, Popular Mechanics spoke with the Navy fighter pilot who was Cdr. David Fravor's wingman during the now-famous 2004 Nimitz UFO encounter. Agreeing to talk only under the condition of anonymity, the fighter pilot confirmed they testified in front of congressional leadership about their encounter. "I've been requested repeatedly to go to the Pentagon and asked, 'Is this what you saw?'"

During a series of email exchanges, Popular Mechanics provided specific information to Gough, the Pentagon spokesperson, in an effort to see if this might influence the DoD's current position. Initially, Gough said she would examine the information and see if she could provide a statement in response. However, Gough has not responded to repeated follow-up requests from Popular Mechanics.

On its own, the evidence showing the Pentagon is interested in UFOs is unlikely to change the minds of many who are skeptical of the idea that mysterious, apparently intelligent, and possibly otherworldly objects might be buzzing around the skies above Earth.

"The whole contracting process for this program was irregular from start to finish," Steven Aftergood, Director for the Federation of American Scientists Project on Government Secrecy, tells Popular Mechanics. "[The AAWSAP contract] sounds like it was a good deal for the contractor. But it would be hard to argue that either the military or the public got their money's worth."

Meanwhile, William Culbreth, an engineering professor at the University of Nevada Las Vegas who authored two of the 38 technical papers provided in the AAWSAP contract, offers a different opinion. He says he was unaware of the UFO background of AAWSAP, but very familiar with BAASS's UFO interest.

"I had some graduate students who worked for BAASS during that time and I know Bigelow has an interest in the topic, but no one mentioned anything about UFOs when they asked me to write the papers," Culbreth says.

Regardless of where the underlying motivation may have come from, Culbreth says his work on the two papers—"Detection and High Resolution Tracking of Vehicles at Hypersonic Velocities" and "Aneutronic Fusion Propulsion II"—led to his examination of new approaches to nuclear propulsion technology, which might not have been inspired otherwise.

"We're looking into these propulsion technologies today, and this area alone led to several of my students pursuing PhDs who I don't think otherwise would have," Culbreth says.

With the wealth of data collected by BAASS, and almost assuredly more information being gathered by AATIP, it raises the question: Is the UAP issue being closely guarded because we don't believe it's real, or because we're afraid we can't understand it?

Mick West, the author of *Escaping the Rabbit Hole: How to Debunk Conspiracy Theories Using Facts, Logic, and Respect*, suggests the public availability and confirmation of rigorous empirical studies by AATIP could change the entire UFO dynamic. "It would be fantastic if there was some good evidence of something new to science. So far there isn't," he tells *Popular Mechanics*.

While he faces considerable angst for trying to debunk UFOs, West says he'd be as thrilled as anyone else if he was able to actually come across something that was truly unexplainable and unknown. "There's no hard feelings," he says. "I understand people are passionate—especially experiencers."

So was this a matter of the government discovering something it didn't understand, and therefore opting to avoid it altogether? Nick Cook, the former aviation editor of *Jane's Defense Weekly* and author of *The Grid*, tells *Popular Mechanics* this idea reminds him of a conversation he had with Ben Rich, the former director of Lockheed Skunkworks and the "father of stealth."

Cook says Rich told him when the ability for stealth aircraft was discovered, but not yet understood, there was considerable debate on what to do next. "Do you put a bunch of money into developing something and end up not being successful because you don't understand it, or do you table the entire idea until you have more science, which runs the risk of someone else figuring it out first?"

With stealth technology, the U.S. military ultimately made the decision to move forward, which led to the development of the world's first stealth aircraft, the F-117 Nighthawk. "I guess it would depend on how wide a knowledge gap you thought there was and how high was the risk for success," Cook says. "Could I see how something could come up, and the decision would be made to tuck something away like the final scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*? Yes, I could see how it could be possible."

"Throughout history, many inventions have preceded an understanding of the science that makes them work," Matthew Hersch, a history of science and technology professor at Harvard University, tells *Popular Mechanics*. "Engineers often 'do science' in the course of their work, just as scientists 'invent.' It's inevitable that we as a species will continue inventing things without a real understanding of how they work, at least until our science catches up."

Being unable to explain something with current science, Hersch says, is merely an invitation to do more science—not a rejection of the scientific worldview as a whole. "Suppressing good, non-fraudulent science because it challenges our beliefs is extremely dangerous," he says. "Nobody has a right to do that, and it is contrary to the interests of humanity—that's what science is for. Fortunately, there is no vast scientific conspiracy to suppress divergent ideas. More often, good science is suppressed by non-scientists for political reasons."

Any discovery of extraterrestrial science or technology, then, is no reason to flush our political norms down the toilet, says Hersch.

"Human beings have believed in the existence of extraterrestrial life for millennia," he says. "I suspect that any revelation that [UFOs] exist would be met with something close to a shrug."

[Article](#)

[REDACTED]

From: Gradisher, Joseph F CIV USN DCNO N2N6 (USA)
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 6:37 AM
To: Gough, Susan L (Sue) CIV OSD PA (USA); [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: Another Article from The Drive
Signed By: [REDACTED]

FYI.

They apparently got a copy of the Navy response to Cong Walker last year through the FOIA process.

Joe Gradisher
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret)
N2N6 Strategic Engagements
[REDACTED]

This Is The Letter The Navy Sent A Congressman Who Was Demanding Answers About UFOs

The Drive, 6 March 2020... by Joseph Trevithick

The lawmaker wanted details about various sightings due to concerns that the incidents might indicate domestic security threats to the United States.

Last year, Congressman Mark Walker, a Republican from North Carolina and a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, wrote a letter to the U.S. Navy demanding answers regarding sightings of what are commonly referred to as unidentified flying objects, or UFOs. Now, The War Zone has obtained a complete copy of the service's response to these questions about how it is recording and assessing incidents involving what it calls unidentified aerial phenomena, or UAP, which the lawmaker has already said he felt was frustratingly insufficient.

On Mar. 5, 2020, the Navy released an unredacted copy of the letter, which then-Undersecretary of the Navy Thomas Modly wrote on July 31, 2019, in response to a Freedom of Information Act request. Politico was first to report on this letter, after obtaining a copy, in September 2019, but did not publish or otherwise reproduce it in full.

Walker had sent his initial letter, addressed to then-Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer, on July 16, 2019, and had made a copy publicly available on July 29, which the War Zone reported on at the time. It is also worth noting that Modly has been Acting Secretary of the Navy since Spencer resigned in November 2019.

"There have been a number of reports of unauthorized and/or unidentified aircraft entering various military-controlled training ranges and designated air space in recent years," Modly wrote in this July 31 response. "The Department of the Navy (DON) takes these reports very seriously and continues to log sightings and fully investigate the accounts."

(Read the full letter [here](#).)

Modly's letter makes no mention of a number of high profile UAP incidents involving Navy F/A-18C/D Hornet and F/A-18E/F Super Hornet fighter jets, dating back to at least 2004. You can read more about these particular events in detail in these past War Zone stories.

It also does not discuss any Navy connection to the Advanced Aerospace Threat and Identification Program (AATIP), or its predecessor, the Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Applications (AAWSA) program, which existed for various periods of time within the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. You can find out more about those programs in these previous War Zone pieces.

"The wide proliferation and availability of inexpensive unmanned aerial systems (UAS) has increasingly made airspace de-confliction an issue for our aviators. Naval aircrews have been provided reporting guidance to determine the frequency and location of UAS operating in training areas," Modly wrote to Walker. "The guidance supports objective, data-driven analysis of incursions. The DON continues to dedicate resources to the tracking and investigation of reports that could affect the safety of our aircrews."

Walker's original letter was very clearly asking for information about the highly publicized incidents that fighter pilots had reported both to their superiors and in the press, which involved purported flying craft capable of extreme levels of speed and maneuverability. The Congressman's inquiry was not explicitly concerned about incidents involving smaller drones breaching restricted airspace around U.S. military facilities or threatening U.S. forces overseas, which has also become an increasing issue in recent years.

"The DON is aligned with the Department of Defense (DoD) and interagency partners on this effort," Modly's letter continues. "The DON is leveraging established relationships with sister Services, other DoD offices, the U.S. Intelligence community and other U.S. government agencies that will help us to better understand these incursions into training areas."

Modly's letter ends by saying that the Navy would continue to work with the House of Representatives via the House Armed Services Committee, of which Walker is not a member. It does not promise to provide him, or the House Committee on Homeland Security, any of the additional information or data on reported UAP sightings, or "physical evidence" thereof, that he sought.

Walker had sent his letter in the first place because of his position that the reported UAP incidents represented a threat to Homeland Security, including to commercial and civilian aircraft, as well as military ones, flying in U.S. airspace.

Walker's position is not entirely unreasonable and The War Zone has reported in the past that some of the UAP sightings worried naval aviators for the same basic safety reasons, among other things. The congressman's comments to Politico last year seem perhaps even more understandable after having read the full text of Modly's response, as well.

"While I am encouraged the Under Secretary of the Navy confirmed that UAP encounters are fully investigated, there is frustration with the lack of answers to specific questions about the threat that superior aircraft flying in United States airspace may pose," Walker told that outlet in a statement. "If the Navy believes that China or Russia possesses advanced aerospace technologies that represent a national security vulnerability, the American people have the right to know what their government is doing about it."

It's unclear if Walker, or any other members of Congress, have followed up or otherwise succeeded in obtaining additional information on this issue. At least some Senators, as well as President Donald Trump, have received classified briefings on the UAP sightings and what the Navy has been doing in response. However, in September 2019, the Navy told Politico that it had not received any further requests from legislators on this topic since Walker's letter.

"We are going to stay on the issue and follow through like we said we wanted to do," Walker had said in his statement at the time.

Whatever the case, the general public safety and national security concerns surrounding UAP sightings that drove Walker to write his original letter certainly haven't disappeared from the general public consciousnesses.

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